

Estonia Sends Firmer Signal to Moscow

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TALLINN, Estonia, April 2 — The new Parliament of Estonia told President Mikhail S. Gorbachev today that the Soviet Constitution could not be the basis for realizing the republic's wish to be independent of the Soviet Union.

The Parliament overwhelmingly approved a resolution addressed to the Soviet leader saying a new secession law scheduled to be debated this week in Moscow did not apply to Estonia.

This was because the republic became part of the Soviet Union "not as a result of the free will of the people of Estonia or through legal parliamentary action, but as a result of military intervention and the occupation of the territory of the Estonian republic by Soviet forces," the resolution said.

Hitler-Stalin Pact

After the Stalin-Hitler pact of 1939, which divided Eastern Europe into spheres of influence, the Soviet Union intimidated Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia into accepting Soviet military bases on their territory. In 1940, Moscow's forces occupied all three Baltic republics, and they were incorporated into the Soviet Union after rigged referendums the same year.

The Government here has chosen a more measured, less confrontational approach to achieving independence than Lithuania. Nonetheless, today's message to Mr. Gorbachev makes clear that Estonia will not consider



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Leaders in Tallinn said a new Soviet secession law would not apply to Estonia.

seceding from the Soviet Union by adhering to methods that are yet to be decided by the Soviet Parliament.

In his appeal to the Lithuanian Parliament on Saturday night, Mr. Gorbachev called on the legislators there to renounce their declaration of independence, and said unequivocally that questions of independence could be resolved only on the basis of the Soviet Constitution. The Estonian Parliament voted 68 to 16, with two abstentions, that Estonian deputies to the Supreme Soviet, the standing legislature in Moscow, should not even take part in the debate

over the new secession law.

"We consider it impossible to participate in the debate of the laws in the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. because our participation in preparing these laws could be construed as our admission of the legality of the inclusion of Estonia into the Soviet Union and its existence as part of the Soviet Union," said the letter to Mr. Gorbachev, which is to be signed by Estonian representatives to the Supreme Soviet in Moscow.

Last week, it seemed as if the Estonian Parliament was being highly mindful of Moscow's threats, decrees and warnings intended to pressure Lithuania into revoking its declaration of independence and to intimidate its Baltic neighbors, Estonia and Latvia, into resisting a similar course.

In the midst of the Kremlin's show of force in Lithuania, the Estonian Parliament voted on Friday to begin a "transitional period" in the quest for complete independence from the Soviet Union, stopping short of the sweeping declaration issued by the Lithuanian Parliament in Vilnius last month.

As a further sign of caution in the republic's bid for independence, the Parliament voted to keep the former Estonian President, Arnold Ruutel, as head of state because of his experience in dealing with Moscow. Lithuania bypassed its former President, Algirdas Brazauskas, and elected Vytautas Landsbergis, a non-Communist music professor who led the republic's independence movement as its head of state.

But the Estonian Parliament also took the unusual step of voting to work hand in hand in this period with the Estonian Congress, which was elected outside the government structure by people who could prove that they or their ancestors had been Estonian citizens when the republic was forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union.

'No Real Power'

Deputies here said that today's letter to Mr. Gorbachev should dispel any notion that Estonia intended to compromise with the Kremlin.

"It simply would have been deceiving ourselves to decide something we cannot carry out," said Endel Lippmaa, an Estonian deputy to the Supreme Soviet in Moscow, speaking about the decision not to declare independence now. "We have no real power now to suspend the Soviet Constitution or to get rid of Soviet military presence here. But we can inform Moscow formally what our intentions are, and that the clock is beginning to tick now."

People here said today that they were less concerned with symbolic statements or with immediately ridding Estonia of all Soviet emblems that have been incorporated into the Estonian Government in the last 50 years.

One of the first gestures of the Lithuanian Government after it declared its independence was to pry the Soviet hammer and sickle off the side of the parliament building. But the legislators here have been carrying on their work forming a new government for its transition to independence amidst the symbols and signs of the soviet government they are seeking to leave.

Above the entrance to the Parliament building, the blue, black and white flag of independent Estonia snaps in the cold spring wind alongside the red flag of Soviet Estonia, with its rippled stripes of blue and white under a hammer and sickle and a star. In the chamber, the deputies face a glowering relief of Lenin flanked by two bronze crests with the hammer and sickle. And at the desk where the speaker and his deputies sit, there are miniatures of the two flags that hang outside.

"There is really no reason to change the symbols of state until our situation truly changes," said Marju Lauristin, a founder of the Estonian Popular Front who was elected on Friday as deputy speaker of the Estonian Parliament. "We should not confuse symbols with reality."